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EXPLORING THE CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF KOFI ABREFA BUSIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL ETHICS FOR CONTEMPORARY GHANA

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Abstract: Christian presence in Ghana is enormous in the 21st century. With 71.2 percent of Ghanaians professing Christianity, one would expect Ghanaian public life to depend immensely on Christian norms. However, the secularization and privatization of Christianity has resulted in the marginalization of the prophetic voice of believers in the Ghanaian public arena. The need for a theological response to Ghana's socio-political context is an urgent concern. In response, this article reflects on how the socio-political thoughts of Kofi Abrefa Busia may be applied to contemporary Ghanaian socio-political discourses to address the country's socio-political needs. The paper is a literature research that critically examines materials extracted from major publications by Busia and other scholars. The study concludes that the solution to Ghana's socio-political challenges depends on the collective efforts of all citizens regardless of political, ethnic or religious affiliation.

Keywords: Busia, Christianity, Democracy, Ghana, socio-political.

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INTRODUCTION

In the quest for an ideal political structure and tradition, Africa's post-independence history has witnessed various political ideologies, including, Senghor's negritude, Nkrumah's African personality and consciencism, Nyerere's *ujamaa*, Kenyatta's *uhuru*, Kaunda's African humanism, and Mobutu's Cultural Revolution. Yet, the political history of Africa is characterized by misuse of political power with the net effect being dictatorship, militarism, racism, ethnicity, tribalism, corruption, and moral and spiritual degeneration. In Ghana (the context of the study), for example, the post-independence history is full of socio-political violence and bloodshed through coup *d'état* and military rule. Today, Ghana is among the politically stable nations in the Africa. The relatively stable political atmosphere has however not had much impact on the nation's socio-economic life. The nation is still confronted with the challenge of poor governance, bribery and corruption, socio-economic injustice, poverty, tribal and ethnic conflicts, and human right abuse, among others.

This paper explores how relevant portions of Professor Kofi Abrefa Busia's socio-political ethics may be applied to contemporary socio-political discourses to address Ghana's socio-political needs. The study fall under the discipline of contextual theology which requires the interaction between biblical teachings, contextual realities and historical theology to formulate theology for a society. As such the paper will take seriously the Ghanaian worldview, and the accumulated teachings of the Christian Church about the subject and more importantly, critically examine Busia's thoughts in the light of Scripture before attempting to give contextual applications.

By way of introduction, the study proceeds to sketch briefly Busia's life and then place his thoughts in the right context before outlining his ethics in the next section. Professor Kofi Abrefa [K. A.] Busia was born on 11th July, 1913 at Wenchi in

the Bono Region of Ghana. He attended basic school at Wenchi and Kumasi and after completion, attended Mfantsipim School in 1930. He furthered his education at the Wesley College, Kumasi, where he was trained as a teacher. He taught at Achimota College between 1935 and 1939. During that period he completed his first degree program (with honors) in Medieval and Modern History through a correspondence course with the University of London. He was appointed the first African lecturer at the University College of Gold Coast (now University of Ghana). Professor Busia also lectured in a number of Universities abroad. He became the leader of the parliamentary opposition against President Kwame Nkrumah (from 1956-1959) and eventually served as the Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana (from 1969-1972). In 1978, Busia died of a heart attack at the age of 65 while in the United Kingdom.

Though he did not received any formal theological training, Busia can be considered as a public theologian who expressed his theological thoughts both within the church and outside it. Busia's life and scholarship reveal some interesting points about Christian faith, culture, ethnicity, nationalism and politics. He was a Ghanaian statesman, an outstanding scholar, and a committed Christian of the Methodist Faith. His theological thoughts must be read in the context of Wesleyan tradition and Ghanaian socio-political context in the post-independent era. His faithfulness to the Wesleyan tradition has been noted by Essamuah (2010, p. 81) who wrote, "Methodist Puritanism permeated...his [Busia's] writings and the piety of his personal faith shone throughout his simple exposition of issues, no doubt due to his position as a [Lay] Preacher... The effectual vehicles of his scholastic expression were his affiliation to tradition, both intellectual and customary, and his deep Christian faith." In the Methodist context, a Lay Preacher is the one who (having received Gods invitation to preach the gospel) has offered himself/herself to

be trained formally to serve as a preacher while remaining a laity. As part of the training to become a Lay Preacher, one studies course such as Old Testament, New Testament, Liturgics, Church and Society, Methodist Studies, and Doctrine. Busia's training as a Lay Preacher gave his socio-political thoughts the necessary biblical and theological foundations.

Given the Methodist roots of Busia's socio-political ethics, it is important to consider key Wesleyan traditions that informed Busia's socio-political ideology before proceeding to the main issues in this paper. Busia's socio-political thoughts were shaped by the Wesleyan quadrilateral which states that every theological or ethical formulation "must rest on the foundations of a quartet of Scripture, reason, experience and tradition" (Boaheng, 2020, p. 89). From the Wesleyan perspective, the theology of the church must be based on the Bible and be in dialogue with the accumulated beliefs of the church (tradition), reason ("critical discipline used in judging the credibility of all interpretations"), and the experience of the receptor community (socio-cultural context) (Boaheng, 2020, p. 94). The Bible however remains the first and final (though not the only) authority in the formulation. As a disciple of Wesley, Busia studied the Bible diligently and applied it meticulously to his life. He also considered reason and tradition and took the socio-cultural context of the Ghanaian society seriously in his formulations.

Secondly, Busia's socio-political thoughts were shaped by Wesleyan anthropology (the doctrine of humankind) and soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). Following the Wesleyan tradition, the core aspects of Busia's anthropological thoughts include the perfect nature of humankind (who was created in the image of God) at the time of creation, the common patology of humanity (the fact that all humans ultimately come from God), the Fall of humanity and the need for salvation. Busia's socio-political thoughts were also informed by the Wesleyan understanding of salvation as affecting both the private

and public life of a person. In Wesley's view a person's relationship with God must have a direct impact on his/her relationship with other humans and the environment. Wesley therefore talked about two aspects of holiness, namely, inward (personal) holiness and outward (social) holiness. These two are inseparable; therefore one cannot claim to have one and not have the other. Similarly, Busia expected the predominantly Christian Ghanaian society to be guided by Christian socio-political ethics. For Busia, it is wrong to dichotomize "what is spiritual" and "what is secular." One's religious life must affect every aspect of life, be it private or public.

Thirdly, Busia's socio-political ethics must be understood in the context of post-independent Ghana which was experiencing a number of socio-political challenges. In the period that immediately followed Ghana's independence, a seismic shift occurred in the socio-political landscape of the country, prompting reactions from the general public. There were poor leadership, corruption, ethnic conflict, *coup d'état* and other which prompted Busia to stand firm to establish a lasting socio-political legacy from a biblical perspective. His views on such areas as democracy, good governance, the rule of law, our common identity, and self-giving are summarized in the next section.

K. A. BUSIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL ETHICS On Multi-party Democracy

Before the colonial masters arrived, most African societies were ruled by traditional chiefs. Colonialism replaced the Ghanaian traditional system of government with Western democracy with a centralized system of government, and this situation eventually reduced the power of traditional rulers. Thus, democracy, as a form of national government, was introduced into Ghana through colonialism. This kind of government is associated with civilian government, elections, free speech and human rights. Though this system has the potential of enhancing social justice, it can also lead to a situation where power is

concentrated in the hands of few people who sometimes (mis)used to formulate policies which tend to oppose social justice (Turaki, 2006).

The Ghanaian traditional type of leadership is democratic, not autocratic. The Akan chieftaincy structure, for example, comprises the paramount chief, divisional chiefs, sub-divisional chiefs, *adikrofofo* (village chiefs). The chief sits together with his council (which also includes the queen mother) during adjudication of matters. During the settlement of dispute the accused person and the offended persons are each given a hearing by the traditional council presided over by the chief. The chief would normally not give a verdict without adequate consultations with his council of elders. The traditional expression for this consultation is, *Yerekɔbisa abrewa* ("we are going to consult the old lady"). In this expression the traditional embodiment of wisdom is personified in an old woman who supposedly offers counsel concerning the final judgment in every case. The expression therefore means that the council is giving itself enough time to seek all available wisdom on the matter before the final verdict comes. Nothing related to the settlement of cases is done in a rush. Therefore, in most cases when the chief (through the linguist) delivers the judgment and pronounces sentence, the parties in dispute accept the judgment without agitation, not because of fear of the chief, but because enough consultations have resulted in an acceptable, fair and proper judgment. Thus, democracy was deeply rooted in African traditional socio-political system long before the arrival of colonial masters. In the traditional setting, authority is community based and derived from the society and the ancestors. Any form of political authority imposed from outside lacks legitimacy and is therefore resisted by the people.

African traditional form of democracy had some unique features that made it suitable for dealing with Africa's unique set of economic, political and social problems. For example, since each chief is

responsible for their own geographical and political area, a country was not ruled by one chief (or president in the case of Western democracy). In those days each lineage usually lived together in one geographical area and so it was appropriate that each lineage had a leader to govern them. Again, chiefs were selected from the royal family through the decision of king makers not through popular votes by the subjects. The occupants of stools, by virtue of their direct link with the original founder of the state, became the custodians of the traditions of the society. This made the chief a key person as far as the public activities of the people were concerned; he was responsible for the welfare of the people. The chief demonstrated his accountability to the people by updating his people on the state of the community during annual social events like festivals. The chief was military, political, religious, administrative, and judicial head of the society chief (Busia, 1951). Busia noted that the introduction of western democracy did not abolish the Ghanaian chieftainship; yet, the policy of indirect rule interfered with the traditional system of leadership. There were few cases where the colonial masters destooled a legitimate chief and installed one who does not qualify as chief (Busia, 1951). The introduction of western democracy into Africa weakened the powers of chiefs.

Busia did not only participated in but also witnessed the transition from colonial to independent governments; at the same time, he lived, studied, and taught in both Ghana and the United Kingdom. His role in mediating between the Akan traditional and British systems of government gave him unique perspectives about chieftaincy, religion and politics which he explored in his doctoral studies. In the Preface, Busia expresses his goal for conducting the research, saying, "I have tried to do two things. First, to give a picture of [Akan] political institutions as they were before the British administration, and secondly, to indicate the changes that have taken place since British administration was established."

chief (Busia, 1951, p. x). He started by giving a detailed description of the role and sacred nature of the office of the traditional Akan chief. The Akan chief is the spiritual head of his community and the intermediary between the living and dead. Occasionally, he enters the *nkonwa dan mu* (the stool room) to offer sacrifices to the ancestors, pour libation and intercede for his people, thereby acting as the priest-chief before his ancestors. The sacredness of the chieftaincy office is emphasized by taboos including: the chief must not hit or be hit by anyone; he is not expected to walk briskly, play with other people in public, be seen walking barefooted; his buttocks must never touch the ground, and he must not be insulted by anyone lest something evil will happen to the community. The chief is the custodian of the customs and traditions of the people. As such, the public activities of the people in the traditional society revolve around the chief (Busia, 1951).

Busia made a lot of remarks that define democracy and outline the ethics of democracy. He contended that anyone who consider religion to be “irrelevant” or “out of place” in Africa’s political discourses lacks “a proper appraisal of the problems of Africa as Africans see them” (Busia, 1967, p. 1-2). He further stressed the role of religion in the public sphere, saying, “behind Africa’s search for modernization and for new political and social institutions lie[s] an interpretation of the universe which is intensely and pervasively religious. It influences the decisions and choices Africa is making” (Busia, 1967, p. 16). From the above quotes, it is clear that Busia saw the need for and promoted the public engagement with religion (that is, the Christian religion). Therefore, the dichotomization between what is “secular” and what is “sacred” has no place in Busia’s socio-political worldview.

He argued further that, as a form of government, democracy must be based on ethics. Hence true democracy “can flourish only in an atmosphere of kindness and affection and benevolence and sympathy” (Busia cited in Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 1). Thus, the search for political power must

be in accordance with what is ethically right. It is improper for democratic structures to ignore public ethics. Therefore, political power should not be considered as an end in itself but as a means to serve God and society. In search for this power, one must show kindness and affection and benevolence and sympathy because power is meant for the benefit of humanity. Busia therefore frowned upon use of abusive language, blackmailing and lies in political-campaign talks, arguing that it is politically unacceptable to insult one’s political opponent(s) or to lie in search of power. Similarly, the use of human (blood) sacrifices in search of political power is unethical.

An Akan maxim goes like this, *Nyansa nni ɔbaakofoɔ tirim* (“wisdom is not the exclusive possession of one person”). Since no individual can have unlimited wisdom, any acceptable political institution must allow for the reconciliation between sectional interests and multi-interest. True leadership structure must take into consideration both minority and majority views. On this basis, Busia opposed proposals to make Ghana a monolithic one-party state, saying one-party system “in the light of our traditions, is a step backward from the accumulated wisdom ... inherited from our ancestors” (Anane-Agyei, 2014, p.58). Busia’s argument for the provision of political alternatives from which to choose, is also rooted in the doctrine of freewill. Humans are endowed with freewill which requires that they are provided with alternatives. These alternatives are what multi-party political system seeks to provide. Therefore, a one-party system stands in direct contrast to human desire to be provided with alternatives.

On Common Identity

Busia’s socio-political ideology is based on human common identity and dignity. He stated that “all nations and people, in spite of cultural and historic differences, belong to the same species of [human], share a common humanity, and can dwell in

brotherly amity” (Busia cited in Anane-Agyei, 2017, p. 105). He stated further that “We consider philosophies and practices based on racial or cultural discrimination or segregation to be wrong and pernicious, and they may even constitute a threat to world peace; so we cannot wherever we find then given expression” (Busia cited in Anane-Agyei, 2017, p. 105-106). Busia’s idea of human dignity is rooted in the biblical doctrine of *imago Dei*. The biblical account of creation indicates that all human beings were created by God in his divine image (Gen. 1:26-27). The entire human race came from the first two persons that God created, namely, Adam and Eve. As God’s image bearers, all humans have intrinsic dignity which no one should compromise. This image was affected by the Fall of humanity (in Gen. 3). Yet, the *imago Dei* gives every human “a universal stature, dignity and value that exceeds the value of the state, the tribe, the race and all human institutions” (Turaki, 2006, 811). Against the backdrop of the *imago Dei*, Busia vehemently opposed tribalism (that is, a very strong attachment to one’s tribe or social group) and ethnocentrism, “an intellectual, emotional, and cultural attitude of a particular group of people who regard the identities and values of other groups of people as false, inferior, or immoral as compared to their own” (Aboagye-Mensah, 1993, p. 130). He promoted brotherhoodness and interconnectedness as antidotes to tribalism and ethnocentrism. The concept of brotherhood implies accepting all members of the human society as equals. Brotherhoodness transcends cultural differences and serves to unify humanity amidst their differences. True human unity is unity amidst racial, economic, tribal and political diversities, among others. Human unity in diversity reflects the unity in the Triune God who exists as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Godhead are united despite their distinctiveness (John 1:1; 10:30). Busia’s ideology of human unity, peaceful coexistence and interdependence is not only grounded in Scripture but also in the

Ghanaian/African cosmology. The Akan express this interdependence in the expression “I am related by blood, therefore, I exist or I exist because I belong to a family.” The Ubuntu philosophy that “a person is a person because of or through others” or the Yoruba saying *Ka fi owo we owo ni owo fi mo* (Two hands wash each other) are further affirmations of the African communal sense of life. Drawing on the African communal view, Busia argued that communal life, interconnectedness and interdependence are key principles for national development. In the introduction to the second edition of Brodie Cruickshank’s *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, Busia wrote about the Mfantse kinship system, “This kinship system emphasised group solidarity, and the individual found fulfilment only as a member of the group; the isolated individual is a nobody; but the individual as a member of the group was a human being, a personality, and the group was always there to offer protection and security, as well as make demands when the occasion arose” (Busia, 1966, 17). Interconnectedness not only promotes peaceful co-existence and cooperation but also affirms the African worldview that human value is intrinsically linked with group solidarity. Interconnectedness teaches people not to fight against one another as expressed in the Adinkra symbol “*Bi Nka Bi*”¹ (“Nobody should bite another”). This cultural symbol encourages people to promote fair play, freedom, peace, forgiveness, unity, harmony rather than conflict or strife. Interdependence in national development requires people to willingly share their resources such as food, clothing, land, money, and others with their neighbors in accordance with the demands of the society. Considering the influence of Western individualistic worldview on Ghanaian culture in the colonial and postcolonial era, Busia’s ideology became a very relevant tool in promoting and

¹ This symbol depicts two fish biting each other tails.

restoring African communal life which is key to Ghana's development.

On Common Human Dignity

Busia's teachings about human dignity—the recognition that humans have a special value intrinsic to their humanity and therefore deserve respect and honor—is based on the idea that all humans were created by God. To place it in the right cultural perspective, the paper considers the Ghanaian concept of humanness briefly below. Humanity, from the Ghanaian perspective, is three-dimensional: “the physical or material dimension, the spiritual dimension, and the social dimension” (Atiemo, 2010, p. 21). The common Ghanaian concept of the human person is that a person consists of the material part (the physical body), and the non-physical aspect, including the soul (Akan: *ɔkra*, Ga: *kla*) and spirit (Akan: *sunsum*). Human identity is rooted in the fact that all humans have *Nyame's* (God's) breathe in them and bear the image of God. The *ɔkra* (soul) comes from God and it is considered divine. It returns to God after one's death to account for a person's earthly life. Since the *ɔkra* is given by God to all humans, the Akan consider every person as a child of God. This idea is expressed in the saying *nnipa nyinaa ye Onyankopɔn mma* (“All human beings are God's children”). The *ɔkra* is considered as endowing humans with immortality, and so a Ghanaian proverb goes like this, “If God can die, then I would too (but since God cannot die, I cannot also die).” Here, the point is that the human soul which derives its existence from God will continue to exist, even after physical death because of its continual existence on God's existence (Amevenku, & Boaheng, 2021). It is in this regard that the *Eve* community of Ghana says “Human beings do not die, they only change their form,” meaning the dead is not dead but are living in another form in a different realm.

As noted earlier, the worldview that all humans are children of God is the basis upon which the traditional notion of human

dignity is built. The Akan term dignity as *animuonyam* (lit. face that brightens) as opposed to *animguasee* (shame/disgrace, but literary meaning face that has been cast low). In Akan cosmology, *animguasee* is so detested that death is to be preferred to it. This fact is highlighted in the proverb *feree ne owuo dee anka afanyinam owuo* (between shame and death, death is to be preferred). *Animguasee nnoɔma* (things that degrade, demean or disgrace human being) are unacceptable in every Ghanaian society and regarded as *akyiwadee* (prohibitions or taboos). Traditionally, there are taboos with respect to the human being. It is generally unacceptable to subject a human being to any form of maltreatment. In Ghanaian culture, it is unacceptable to use a broom on a human being. The reason is that broom is meant to sweep refuse (garbage) which are not useful in human habitation; therefore, to use broom on a human being is to equate the person to garbage. Also, to be seen naked publicly is very humiliating and has to be avoided. Human dignity may be undermined by diseases, physical disability, and immorality, among others.

As stated earlier, Busia witnessed Ghana's colonial and post-colonial eras. The neglect of human dignity in colonial days was fresh in his mind when he spoke of human dignity. During the slave trade people were sold, stripped naked and sent away from their home. Exclusion from their community was a traumatic experience people had to endure. The slave masters raped some of the slaves and subjected them to disgrace. Slaves were engaged in forced labor and subjected to all kinds of attacks and abuses. Busia's aim was to help his people overcome the traumatic experience the nation passed through in the hands of their colonial masters. For him, one way to do this was to restore human rights and dignity in the society. He stated, “There can be no inequality in our common humanity....Because of our bitter experience of dictatorship and tyranny... We are determined to establish the sovereignty of the people and the rule of

law as the foundation of our society” (Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 68, 88).

From Busia’s perspective, all people must enjoy the same human dignity no matter their origin, race, color, or gender. His teachings were meant to reverse the *animguasee* that had come upon his fellow Ghanaians through colonialism and unethical political practices in the postcolonial days so that the ordinary Ghanaian could have his/her *animuonyam* fully restored. To summarize, Busia considered human dignity is an integral part of true “self-government”, therefore, post-independent Ghana must uphold it.

On Social Justice

Justice refers to the rights and duties of people to each other. It is “an ethical concept with immense social significance implies the notion of fairness, fair deal, moral integrity and righteousness in the dealings of men with one another and in the affairs and transaction of social life” (Iwe, 1985, P. 235). According to Ojiakor and Unachukwu “social justice” refers to “above all working to build a society that is intrinsically balanced, a society in which the structures are fair to everybody without exception. For instance, constructing a society in which the minorities, the homeless, women and the poor are not discriminated against either in law or in practice” (Orjiakor and Unachukwu, 2001, p. 74). Social injustice may be in the form of socio-economic injustice, socio-political injustices, socio-religious injustice, and socio-judicial injustice. Injustice (as opposed to justice) has to do with inhuman treatment of a person by another person, unfair distribution of natural endowments and infringement of fundamental human rights. God demands justice from all humans in all spheres of life, more so, political leaders. God detest those who deny others of justice and trample upon the rights of others. Thus, Mott says “Righteousness expressed in justice is the indispensable qualification for worship—no justice, no acceptable public worship” (Mott, 1993, p. 79).

The book of Amos gives a biblical picture of God’s demand for righteousness and justice from (political) leaders. Amos was an eighth-century prophet who stressed God’s demand for social justice and concern for the oppressed. He ministered in Israel at the time that Israel had become prosperous and politically stable and exhibited the common fruits of prosperity such as pride, luxury, selfishness, oppression. During Amos’ time, commerce thrived (8:5), social classes emerged (4:1-3), people lived lavishly (3:15; 5:11; 6:4, 11), and the rich enjoyed life at the expense of the poor (2:6-7; 5:7, 10-13; 6:1-6, 12; 8:4-6). Amos responded to the situation by stressing God’s moral rule over the universe and his (God’s) demand for justice and concern for the marginalized or oppressed. He expressed God’s hatred for the maltreatment of the less privileged people (Amos 2:7; 4:1; 5:7, 11, 24; 8:4-6). The climax of his message is found in 5:24 where he cautions Israel to let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. His point was that there is no dichotomy between true life-giving worship of God and social justice. The demand for social justice is founded on human rights, dignity and equality.

Like Amos, Busia’s socio-political thoughts are rooted in social justice. Busia opined that the aim of a political part should be “to create a democratic welfare society which all may live a life of dignity and freedom, protected from destitution and from oppression” (Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 7). Busia’s teachings on social justice must be interpreted in the light of Ghana’s experience of dictatorship and tyranny during colonial rule. In the postcolonial era the need to protect the individual and tame power became obvious. For Busia, social justice requires the establishment of the sovereignty of the people as well as the rule of law. This is rooted in the biblical teaching that God created humans as moral beings and gave them not only the gift of dignity but also the gift of human dignity, human right, equality and freedom (cf. Acts 17:26-31; Rom. 2:6-11; Gal. 3:28). Human dignity and human rights relate to each

other in at least three ways, namely, human dignity is the product of the successful enforcement of human right; both human dignity and human right are enhanced by participation in the political system and human dignity may result in the enforcement of human rights (Atiemo, 2010). Busia's socio-political ethics demands that all persons be treated equal before the law. For Busia, discrimination, oppression and favoritism are unethical. Therefore, true democracy and true governance must enhance free expression of opinion in societal affairs. If so, then every citizen must be free from external powers. Busia opined that, it is therefore the responsibility of every government to defend the rights of the poor and the marginalized against any sort of oppressors. He condemned social injustices and demanded moral uprightness of an individual, and concern for the rights of the neighbor.

In the context of governance, each member and each sector of the society contributes their own quota towards the attainment of the common good of the society. To this end, everyone and especially leaders must join in the battle against poverty, sicknesses, ignorance, corruption, moral decadence, among others. Thus, "the ultimate goal of politics is the creation of conditions, which will give every individual the opportunity to be the best he can as a human being and as a member of a community" (Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 37). That is to say, political power must be used as a tool to serve fellow humans, to make the society a better place to live and to make the life of citizens nobler and happier. People must be provided with good drinking water, health and sanitary facilities, access to education and electricity, as well as good roads. For Busia the yardstick by which political success or failure should be measured is the life condition of the citizenry. He noted as follows: "We must judge our progress by the quality of the individual, by his knowledge, his skills, his behavior as a member of the society, the standards of living he is able to enjoy and by the degree

of cooperation, harmony and brotherhoodness in our community life as a nation" (Anane-Agyei, 2017, P. 104). The key point is that political power must be used to make every citizen live an improved life in freedom. Busia's quest for social justice is summed up in his definition of democracy as "the expression of faith in [human's] capacity for the progressive extension of freedom and justice in the society" (Busia, 1967, p. 72).

Social justice and the fight against corruption are two sides of the same coin. Bribery and corrupt is a great enemy to national development. Busia fought bribery and corruption with all the seriousness it deserves. On 21st February, 1970, Busia's government dismissed 568 civil servants for corruption, inefficiency, and mismanagement of state funds. Among those dismissed was Mr. J. W. Abruquah, who was the headmaster of Mfantsipim, Busia's alma mater. Abruquah's dismissal prompted many reactions from students, staff, management board, and old students of the Mfantsipim School. Eventually, the management board, led by the President of the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana, Right Reverend Thomas *Wallace* Koomson met with the Prime Minister Busia on the matter. The prime minister refused to change his decision because doing so would defeat his fight against corruption. His attitude shows the high level of determination to fight corruption in the society.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GHANA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE

Before drawing implications from the study for the Ghanaian context, it is appropriate to examine Ghana's socio-political situation. Ghana is a West-African country that was once colonized by Britain. In 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence. *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who led the country to independence remarked that Ghana was prepared to manage her own economic and political affairs. Unfortunately, post-independence Ghana has witnessed social

and political violence and bloodshed through coup *d'état* and military rule. After many years of toiling under military regimes, the country returned to constitutional rule in 1992 and since then the political atmosphere has been relatively stable. Ghana's political stability has however not translated into socio-economic development. The nation is characterized by bribery and corruption, bad roads, unemployment, poverty, low living standard, poor governance, and ritual murder for wealth, among others.

The political landscape in Ghana's Fourth Republic (which spans from 1992 to date) has been dominated by two political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Of the eight general elections conducted in the Fourth Republic, the NDC has won four (1992, 1996, 2008 and 2012) while the NPP has also won four (2000, 2004, 2016 and 2020). General elections have been challenged at the Supreme Court on at least two occasions (2012 and 2020). The two main political parties sometimes clash each other during elections. In a multi-party democratic country like Ghana, opposition parties have the responsibility of keeping the ruling party on its toes. Unfortunately, what is common in Ghana is to find opposition parties blinding their eyes to the good side of the ruling government and hence criticizing the ruling government negatively without critically assessing what is going on.

Ghana's political parties also suffer from internal problems. The issue of ethnicity is a major problem. Ethnic sentiment influence the selection of candidates to run on the ticket of a party. After elections, appointment of personnel to fill positions are mostly done on ethnic lines, such that more people are appointed from the ethnic group which gave the ruling party the highest support during the elections. The NPP is mostly supported by the Akyems and the Asantes (both of which form part of the Akan ethnic group) while the NDC enjoys massive support from the

Ewes and people of northern Ghana.² Another challenge to Ghana's political system is nepotism, that is, the situation whereby government appointees are selected from close family and kinship. This practice leads to incompetence as people are made to occupy certain positions which they are not qualified to occupy but are appointed based on family ties with the President or the one in charge of the appointment. Nepotism not only results in politics of exclusiveness but also leads to putting "square pegs in round holes." There is also over-exploitation of incumbency and "winner-takes-all" attitude both of which are not good for national development. Over-exploitation of incumbency is sometimes seen in the use of state resources for political activities. The "winner-takes-all" attitude comes to play when the ruling government takes all the credits for socio-economic achievements that are achieved, without acknowledging the role played by the opposition party or parties. Both attitudes tend to suppress national development.

With this brief contextual background, the study now continues to draw some implications for the Ghanaian society. In a multiparty democracy, one party rules at a time while the other parties serve as opposition parties. Opposition parties have a major role to play even though they are not in power. They are to scrutinize the policies of the ruling party and offer constructive criticisms for positive change. In the process, they are to encourage the ruling government to do what is right and give praise where it is due. Busia's socio-political ethics call opposition parties to protect the interest of the country by educating the public on bad actions and laws of the government and assisting in the process of building public opinion about it.

Secondly, contemporary Christian leaders (following Busia's lead) must engage the political arena with ethics that

² Generally speaking, the NPP can be considered as an Akan part while the NDC is a non-Akan party.

are not only rooted in Scripture and Ghanaian worldview but are also relevant for addressing Ghana's socio-political challenges. In this regard, the Church has the responsibility of teaching her members and instilling in them Christian values needed for the Ghanaian socio-political realm. Here, The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Most Rev. Paul K. Bofo (2021, p. 17) serves us well in stating that the teaching ministry of the Church "must have spiritual and social ramifications wherever Christians find themselves." This means that the teaching ministry of the Church must help raise people who would not compromise their faith in any sphere of their life under any circumstance. The Church as the conscience of the nation and the earth and the light of the world must live up to her mandate of transforming the society. Christians must rise to the challenge to call for interventions to prevent further occurrences of sad and gruesome incidents of spousal killings, armed robbery, and carnage on our roads, among others in the country. The teaching ministry of the church "must lead to charting a new path of hard work, integrity, and the desire for genuine acquisition of wealth as a nation" (Bofo, 2021, p. 18). Most of those in political positions are Christians belonging to one church or the other. Similarly, there are a lot of Christians aspiring to be national leaders in the near future. Teachings about stewardship of power is important in raising Christian leaders. According to the stewardship principle, every form of power ultimately belongs to God and so all people will give account of the authority that God has delegated to them. Therefore, national leaders are not only accountable to their followers but also and more importantly to God. This fact should inform political decisions and activities of contemporary Ghanaians.

Thirdly, contemporary political leaders must be unifiers. Ghana is a multiethnic country with people from different backgrounds. Busia built his ideology around the unity of the human race. In the same way contemporary

leaders must serve to unite the country and not divide it. In this regard, any form of ethnocentrism and nepotism must be eschewed. The society must promote reconciliation, peace-making and unity in diversity. Political opponents must not be seen as enemies; different people are bound to have different views and the expression of a different opinion should not make someone an enemy. When there is conflict between supporters of two political parties, it is proper for the leaders of these parties to sit together to find practical solutions to the conflict (devoid of political sentiments). The ruling party must not ignore the good policies of other parties. There is the need to accept, develop and promote political ideologies that other parties may have, provided they will improve the lives of the populace. The ruling party should not only acknowledge and implement good policies of other parties; it must also appoint qualified people regardless of their political affiliation to help build the nation. This aspect of politics of inclusiveness is lacking in the Ghana/Africa because it is believed that such appointees from other parties will end up sabotaging the ruling party and make it unpopular. In the opinion of the author such saboteurs will be identified by the citizenry and then be responsible for their actions and inactions. Rather than making the ruling government unpopular, saboteurs will themselves become unpopular and lose their political power and influence.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how relevant aspects of Busia's socio-political ethics may be applied to contemporary Ghana. Politicians must note that no contribution in respect of a decision-making process is completely wrong. No one is actually the custodian of all wisdom. Therefore, there is the need to engage people of different political affiliations in the national policy-making process. Nepotism, tribalism, bribery and corruption are among the key enemies to socio-political development.

Therefore, these negative practices should be shelved to enhance national progress. The study not only asks the church to speak prophetically against these practices but also to teach her members Christian political principles. The church must serve as the voice for the oppressed, and the voiceless. More often than not, political aspirants troop into churches for divine intervention in upcoming elections. The church can take advantage of such moments to make politicians recognize that their power comes ultimately from God who has mandated them to use it for the benefit of the entire society. Finally, socio-political reforms must also be rooted in Ghanaian traditional socio-political wisdom which emphasizes selflessness, interconnectedness (brotherhood), interdependence, harmony, and interdependence among others. The discussions in this paper point to one fact: Ghana's socio-political challenges requires a socio-political ideology that not only considers biblical teachings but is also takes seriously the Ghanaian worldview and socio-political setting of the country.

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